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MARVELS OF STAGE MECHANISM.

THE scenery and stage mechanism at the performance of Wagner's "Parsifal" at Bayreuth must have been marvellous. Appliances quite unknown to American managers seem to have been employed, for instance, to produce the moving scene in the first act, in which Parsifal and Gurnemanz appear to be walking through the forest to the Hall of the Grail. Some idea may be formed of the difficulties to be overcome in the presentation of this effect by the following stage directions in the libretto: "Gradually, while Parsifal and Gurnemanz appear to walk, the scene changes imperceptibly from left to right. The forest disappears; a door opens in rocky cliffs and conceals the two; they are then seen again in sloping passages which they appear to ascend. Long sustained trombone notes softly swell; approaching peals of bells are heard. At last they arrive at a mighty hall, which loses itself overhead in a high vaulted dome, down from which alone the light streams in." These directions, a writer in *The Academy* says, were carried out to the letter. He says: "The Hall of the Grail, again, is a truly splendid scene. On most stages the impression of an enormous

ber of printings." The following detailed description of the process is given in *The Printing Times* and *Lithographer*:

"A photographic negative of the picture to be reproduced is made, and from it are printed five proofs in gray color. An artist who has been used to chromo-lithography is then employed to work up these photo-prints, but instead of working by stippling, hatching, etc., he employs definite tints, composed of white and black, mixed to form five different gradations from white to black. On the one that is to represent the yellow he first paints out in white wherever yellow is not to occur; he paints in black what is to be a full yellow, and the intermediate gradations are laid in with the varying shades of gray. In like manner are painted up the impressions representing the blue, red, gray and brown printings. From these prints photographic negatives are taken of the size the work is to be. Thick glass plates are then covered with a film of gelatine made sensitive to light by means of a bichromate salt. The negatives having been placed upon these plates, they are exposed to light for a few minutes, and are then washed to remove the yellow bichromate salt. They can now be printed from after the manner of

subject demands. Of course there is no necessity for thus limiting the 'blocks' to five, although at present it has not seemed good to the inventor to exceed that number. The results, in gradation and delicacy of tone, are certainly superior to ordinary chromo-lithographs, and we understand they can be produced at such a cost as would allow their being printed 'even on match boxes.' A further advantage over chromo-lithography consists in the fact that reproductions can be obtained direct from nature, instead of invariably following the interpretation of any particular artist. Several instances have been submitted to us of still life subjects, vases, and jugs, taken from the objects themselves, with most satisfactory results. We should like to see a landscape printed in this manner, from nature direct."

THE LOWELL HOLIDAY CARDS.

SINCE referring last summer to the designs for Christmas and New Year's cards to be published by Messrs. John A. Lowell & Co., of which advance proofs were sent us for notice, we have received the



HOLIDAY CARD DESIGN. BY G. W. EDWARDS.

building is produced by a carefully painted perspective. The immense depth of the stage at Bayreuth allows the large hall itself to be presented as a reality; and it will be seen at once how much is gained by the long processions of knights and youths entering from the back and traversing the entire length of the hall. Wonderfully painted, down to the smallest detail, are the forest and meadow scenes of the first and third acts; while the magic garden of Klingsor in the second, with its luxuriance of tropical vegetation, is a most gorgeous stage picture." The Hall of the Grail was painted as an exact counterpart of the interior of the Aya Sophia at Constantinople.

THE RIVAL OF CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHY.

LAST month our London correspondent referred to the new Hoeschotype process, which claims to "reproduce works of nature or of art in facsimile or natural colors" in five printings at most, "with greater truthfulness and with greater delicacy than can be obtained by means of chromo-lithography by five times the num-

ber of printings." The following detailed description of the process is given in *The Printing Times* and *Lithographer*:

"The manner of production in this new method will be easily understood from the above description by any one conversant with the 'Woodbury' process of printing photographs. Where the new process most palpably shows its superiority to chromo-lithography is in the fact that every grade of intensity, from the lightest to the darkest, of a particular color, is obtained at one printing. The order of color precedence in the printing is first yellow, then red, of the particular tone required, then blue, giving the greens, etc., then gray deepening into black, to give the requisite force, and finally the peculiar general tint of local color which the

entire series. The cards are all in black and white, but are engraved on steel with so much delicacy that artistically we consider them much superior to the average holiday card printed in colors. Of their graceful fancy if design the reader will be able to judge by the examples we have reproduced by permission of the publishers. It is due to the latter that we should remind the reader that in reproducing them, and slightly enlarging them, it has been impossible to retain the mechanical delicacy of the originals.

THERE is a class of sitters who insist upon being painted precisely "as they are;" they desire no modifications, but wish to see simply their veritable selves without flattery or qualification. Frequently the younger artist, in the simplicity of his inexperience, endeavors to meet their wishes; but however satisfactory, in certain cases, such a portrait may be to the artist, it was never yet wholly agreeable to a sitter; for in respect of personal appearance human nature is at least "indifferent honest," and does not love unpalatable truths,

HOW TO RE-LINE PICTURES.

AN operation which is often necessary for old pictures, and which is the subject of much public prejudice, is that of re-lining. One is apt to believe that it is a mysterious and difficult matter, which only few of the initiated understand. In point of fact, there is nothing simpler than its ways and means.

A picture constitutes in itself a connected and solid crust, which is not in the least (as commonly believed) incorporated with the canvas or panel on which it rests; it can, consequently, be easily detached in a single piece. Given an old picture, on a mouldering or torn canvas, or on a worm-eaten panel, one can separate the painting from this canvas or panel, and place it on a new and similar foundation, or it can be transferred from canvas to panel, or from panel to canvas. More frequently, however, the old canvas is only strengthened by a new one.

Here is the method of procedure. We will take a picture which only needs the canvas to be strengthened. First, the painted side will be covered, for protection, with a layer of strong and fluid paste, on which a sheet of paper is laid. Then, when the paste and paper are dry, the canvas is taken off the old mount to which it was nailed, and placed on a table, face downward, the edges being held out by cramps or in some other way. All the roughnesses on the back are effaced with pumice-stone, then a new canvas (and in some cases a double canvas) is laid. Next a flat iron, lightly heated, is passed over the whole, to smooth it and dry the glue between the two canvases. The picture has now only to be turned over, the paper and paste taken from its face, and it can be nailed on its mount again, or, better, on a new mount. The operation is thus concluded.

is covered with a fine gauze. When this gauze is quite dry, it is also covered with several successive layers of paper carefully stretched and glued, so as to form a

order to dissolve the preparation which causes it to adhere to the under surface of the painting; and when it is sufficiently soaked, probably in thirty to fifty minutes, the canvas is removed; beginning in one corner and taking it with much precaution on the cross, little by little it is separated from the subjacent crust. When the whole is entirely removed, a fine gauze is applied to the painting, then a single or double cloth, an iron is passed over it, finally the painting is again nailed on a fresh mount, and the cardboard and glue which protected it in front are taken off.

The transfer of pictures from a panel is not more difficult. After the surface is protected with cardboard, and the picture is laid on the table, face downward, the panel is attacked with plane and chisel. The wood is gradually shaved away until near the painting. Then every precaution must be used to leave the under surface of the picture entire, and moisture is employed to take off the last particles of wood. Lastly, a new panel or a canvas is applied to the picture detached in this guise.

It will be seen, therefore, that all these operations are very simple, and that the pretensions of professional re-liners to some mysterious art are perfectly unjustifiable. Every amateur endowed with a little patience and manual dexterity may manage to re-line his pictures himself, as well as clean them, if he cares to take the trouble. He must begin, of course, with pictures of little value before venturing to touch those of greater worth.



CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGN. BY G. W. EDWARDS.

pasteboard. When this again is dry, the canvas is unnailed from its old mount and stretched face downward on a very smooth table. These preliminaries be-

colors that possess these qualities in the highest degree, and be careful to get them on with as little disturbing of the under tints as possible. Commence with a clear

IN fruit and flower painting in water-colors transparency and brilliancy are very important: seek



CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGN. BY G. W. EDWARDS.

Now, let us take a picture of which the canvas is entirely destroyed and which must be taken off and transferred to a new one. After having coated the face with a thin glue made from hides, or from garlic and water, it

ing over, the more delicate operation begins of taking from the picture, which remains affixed to the cardboard, the old canvas at the back. This is begun by damping it with water by means of a wet napkin, in

neutral tint for the shadows, and finish with the transparent colors, using body color very sparingly in the sparkling lights of fruit, the stamens and pistils of flowers, and perhaps occasionally on a slender stem.